

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, December 29. 1691.

We have receiv'd a very useful Question in Navigation, which we think very well worth a publick Communication; 'tis as follows:

Quest. 1. **S**uppose a deaf Man well skill'd in Astronomy and Navigation, should have all his Books and Instruments taken from him, and he put down in the Ships Hold some days before she sets sail, and there kept close many days after, so that he knoweth not when the Ship set sail, how long she hath sail'd, nor towards what Coast, and then to be brought aloft some clear Morning, and his Books and Instruments deliver'd him again, and he commanded to tell the Year, and day of the Month, and in what Point or part of the Earth the Ship is in: What method must he use?

Ans. We answer, (1.) He must with all Exactness take the Suns Meridian Altitude, and rectifie his Azimuth-Compass, (an Instrument well known to most expert Seamen that Sail to the East Indies) duely noting the present Variation of the Compass, and set his minute Watch to the time of the day very exactly. (2.) And After noon when the Sun is well Declin'd towards the West, take his Altitude and Azimuth, and well note the time of the Observation: And now having the Altitude, Azimuth and Hour, by the first Case of Norwoods oblique Spherical Triangle, [viz. two sides and an Angle opposite given] you may thereby find the Suns Declination, with which and the Meridian Altitude before found, you may thereby find the Latitude of the place. (3.) And at Sun-set, take his Amplitude also the exact time of Sun-setting, by which the Artist may make another Operation for the Latitude, by the 13th. Case of Norwood's Rectangled Spherical Triangles, [viz. two sides given to find an Angle included.] These observations, and operations may shew the Latitude nearly: But yet because the Sun has the same Declination twice in a Year, the day of the Month will be uncertain. (4.) The Artist must then take the Meridian Altitude of the first known Star that Transitteth the Meridian, and note the exact time thereof, and this Observation will either confirm or correct the former; for the Latitude, and the time of the Stars Southing conferr'd with its Right Ascension, will shew the Suns Right Ascension, and consequently the day of the month. (5.) But because this dependeth upon the time of the Stars coming to the Meridian, which may not be perhaps so exactly taken, the precise day will yet be dubious: But when the Moon ascends the Horizon near to some known Star, which with a little Conference with his Ephemerides, assureth him both of the Year and Day, and by taking the Moons distance from the Star, and the time of the Observation he finds the Longitude. (6.) And lastly, By his Inclinator he may take the Inclination of the Needle in the place, and thereby find the Longitude, as Mr. Bond has shew'd in his Book call'd, *The Longitude found*, which he may compare with the former, and according to these Directions may an Example be formed. — This is an excellent Proposition, and perhaps when 'tis publish'd, (for 'twas never yet in Print) we doubt not but some of our best experienc'd Seamen and Mariners may try experiments thereby, and put it into Practice.

Quest. 2. A Gentlewoman marries, the Husband by Contract is to leave her so much at his Death, (if she survives him) she would deposit a parcel of her Husbands Goods in a Friends hands, to be there kept for her own use without the Husbands privy: This I fear is a thing too much practis'd by Wives in this great City, and elsewhere, to the great damage (and sometimes ruine) if their Husbands; therefore your resolution is desired at large, viz. Whether 'tis not unlawful in both the Wife and Receiver: This Question and your Solution I am sure may be of great use to the publick?

Ans. Theft on either side is very base and unjust, since what is the Husbands is the Wifes, and what is the Wifes is also the Husbands; but the injustice is worse on the Womans side, since the Law can only touch the Husband, who is answerable both for his own and his Wifes Actions. This is so well known, that we want not some unhappy Instances of Women that have only Married, to have Husbands to lye in Prison for 'em. Such an Instance as this in the Question, seems as unnatural as for one Member of a Body to seek for private Receptacles and Circulations of Blood, in prejudice to the rest, notwithstanding the whole frame of Nature is settled before, and that in the best Method possible for the good of the whole Man. In justice neither Man nor Wife has power to dispose of a farthing without each others Concurrence, tho this strictness is conveniently enough dispenc'd with, where either party is willing to trust to the Judgment of the other in what is proper for their Stations, as the way of publick Concerns, and the private management of the Family are different. And indeed in all matters of little moment, there's no need of the trouble of acquainting one another, since 'tis fairly enough suppos'd that if the other knew, they would not contradict it; which allowance does not yet infringe the privileges of Justice, which is that we now speak of.

Tho' after all, we don't deny but in some Cases such secret securing one parties separate interest, without giving the other any account, may be very just, vertuous, and prudent. As for Instance, when either the Man or the Wife run on willfully and obstinately in an unavoidable Course of ruining themselves and their Families; but even here, all convenient tenderness, Admonition and Counsel first by ones self, and then by Friends, ought to be made use of; which if to no purpose, the last Remedy is as reasonable as to lay things of value out of the way of Children and Fools.

Quest. 3. In Vol. 3. N. 24. Question 12. of your Mercury, 'tis asked whether Devils can generate, &c. which you answer in the Negative. In Dr. Martin Luther's Colloquia Mensalia, is a Relation of a certain Man, who was much addicted to Swearing, especially one particular Oath, he having a Wife, and she dying, sometime after her Death, a Spirit appear'd to him, he asked it who it was, it answered, I am your Wife: he replied, My Wife is dead; the Spirit replied, true, by reason of your Swearing I dyed; but if you will leave off your Swearing, (or your most usual Oath) I will live with you again; to which he agreed, and accordingly the Spirit either carried then, or came again in the form of his Wife; they lived together a considerable time, and had Children, or at least a Child: But one day having some Friends at Dinner, she went up to fetch something, but tarrying long he forgot himself, and swore his formerly accustomed Oath; after which going up stairs he found the garments which she wore lying cross the side of the Box or Trunk in which the things lay which she went up for, her self being never seen after. The Elector of Saxony (I think) in whose Jurisdiction it happened, sent to Luther to have his Opinion of the Children, which I have forgot, (not having the Book at present by me,) as also the page where you may find it, and it may be some other material passages thereto relating; but if the Book be hard to procure, if you let me know it, I will send you the whole Relation Verbatim. Few Protestants question the truth of any thing which Luther spake of his own knowledge; wherefore for the satisfaction of my self and others, I would desire you to give your Opinion of this matter, and of the condition which the Devil made with the Man to leave off his Swearing, which was contrary to his Interest?

Ans. We are certain the matter of Fact is absolutely impossible, from the Nature of Humane Bodies, and the wonderfull Chymistry (if we may so say) that Nature uses in Concoction. The Devil may re-

present

present but can never form a Body with regular Veins, Muscles, Arteries, and all the operations of the Animal Spirits, &c. If our Querist has a very particular Relation, we desire him to give us an account of the Birth, Nature, and Constitutions of the Children. The Oath was only a Blind to the rest, and the whole was a juggle and imposture of the Devil.

Quest. 4. About 2 months ago I made bold to beg your Opinion concerning a strange voice calling a person who dyed soon after; but I find I have not been particular enough to satisfy you that it was not a Dream or a Fancy, a fault which I run into for fear of being impertinent: But since you are pleased to think it worth your notice, I will endeavour to answer all your Objections. — The Gentlewoman positively affirms, that not only her self, but the whole Family were utterly ignorant of her Friends illness, and that she had not dreams of her, nor so much as thought of her for some weeks before: And though I cannot say that all the Family were Strangers to her, yet it could not possibly be any of them, for the voice seemed sometimes by the Bed, and immediately at a great distance, the door being fast locked all the time, and as I said before, the voice called at least 40 times. — The Gentlewoman is very desirous to know what you think the voice was, and why she only should hear her called, since she was no relation, but only a bare acquaintance?

Ans. See our last Paper of Apparitions.

Quest. 5. The inclosed was found in the street tyed with the Bone in it, in the manner I have sent it, and brought to me to know what might be the meaning of it; which not knowing, I have sent it you to desire your Opinion of it, the manner of its being tyed with the Bone, and writing (I think in Blood) within it seeming very strange? The words were these:

Quartermaster Page :: 9 Dec. 1691. :: What is Law, Martial: Our Father, What is Martial Law? a word of Command: What more? Empeuring to destroy our the Enemy: Who gives the Word? My King and my God: What's the Word? (a drop of of flame.) Helwood.

A Man that understands a Man, ought not to be countermanded. Sign that O King.

Ans. The Bone that came along with this Letter, and the Original Paper writ in Blood, are to be seen at the Rotterdam Coffee-house in Finch-lane, behind the Royal Exchange, if any persons have the Curiosity of passing their Judgment on it. We read that the Geese once sav'd the Roman Capitol, and things of the least moment in appearance, have had deep designs at the bottom. But we hope there's nothing of the Nature of Lilliburtero, and Bullin a Lab, the word of distinction at the Massacre in Ireland. Our Opinion is, That 'tis only a trick to amuse the finder, who might be very credulous and fearful, or else that 'tis an Idle Fancy, or Frolick of some one that is either out of his Wits, (which seems most probable) or of one that is affected with such incoherent expressions.

Quest. 6. The Question I have to propound to you, I received from so good hands, together with the permission of informing you of the very person where the Servant-maid lives, that I don't doubt but upon the enquiry you will your selves be as well satisfied of the truth, as I was before I ventur'd to send it you: At Sir J. B—s in Sussex, there lives a Servant-maid whose Tears whenever she weeps, are very near as red as Blood, and have been observ'd to have been so from her Infancy: Pray give me your Thoughts what the occasion may be of such a Phenomenon, and if ever you heard or read of the like: I hope on Saturday I may expect a solution of it.

Ans. We have not yet met such an Instance as this, we'll make it our Business to consult all the Naturalists, and Foreign Journals about it, and return our answer in a short time.

Quest. 7. I have to maintain my wicked Extravagances wrong'd a certain person who is now dead, both of Money and other things, for which I being troubled in Conscience, and strack with a remorse of my Crime against Almighty God; I am resolv'd to the utmost of my power to make a full and speedy Restitution to the Widow of the deceased, but the shame of owning my self guilty of such a Fault, makes me very unwilling to put my name to a Letter I shall send with the Money: Pray your Opinion, whether the satisfaction won't be

sufficient without discovering who I am, so the Reader I give satisfaction to?

Ans. This Question is already answer'd a pretty while since in the Affirmative, to which we refer you.

Quest. 8. A Friend of mine is much dissatisfied, and willing to refer the Case to your Society: She having been engaged to a Gentleman upon the account of Marriage, and when he first made his address to her Friends, he pretended himself a Protestant, and for their satisfaction went to Church, and now having gained the Ladies Affection, declares himself a Roman Catholick: Whether or no she can lawfully break off the Contract made between them, the Lady having discours'd him about her own Liberty, and is sensible she shall not have it?

Ans. In our Opinions that Contract is void, which cannot be kept without Sin. If the Contract is not ratify'd to all intents and purposes in the Eye of Law; we believe the Laws of God requires it not, but rather forbids it, Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: Whether the word Unbelievers does not only comprehend under it, Jews and Heathens, but also such as Err both in the Fundamentals of Christian Religion, and also practical Atheists; and if so, Whether not only Papists in General, but also the particular Person in the Question intended, be not concern'd in this Prohibition, we leave to the decision of all Learn'd and Casuistical Divines: And tho' we have given our Opinion, we desire you not to rely on it, unless confirm'd by the Approbation of some of our Bishops, for 'tis a matter of great Moment, that pretends to the decision of an Interest in both Worlds.

* * The Questions concerning Justification, extempore Prayer, and the Parsons Sons, were answer'd in our last Saturdays Mercury.

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